

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 14-16 remain pending in this application, and have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 9-13 and 17 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 6, and 14 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

At paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) is not perfected because an English translation of the priority document was not filed. Applicants respectfully submit that this assertion is incorrect. M.P.E.P. § 201.14(b) requires only a claim for priority and a certified copy of the foreign application be filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to perfect priority. There is no requirement to file a translation of the foreign priority document. 35 U.S.C. § 119(b)(2) merely states that the Director may require a certified copy of the original foreign application, specification, and drawings upon which it is based, a translation if not in the English language, and such other information as the Director considers necessary. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request acknowledgment that the claim for foreign priority has been perfected.^{1/}

At paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the disclosure for the reason that the section "CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS" is allegedly missing mention of the claimed priority application, copending applications, and related arts. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that

^{1/}Nonetheless, if the Examiner still wishes an English translation of the priority document for other purposes, the Examiner is respectfully requested to notify Applicants.

M.P.E.P. § 202.01 requires cross-referencing to related applications when the related applications are either one or more prior-filed copending nonprovisional applications or international applications designating the United States of America. This does not apply with respect to the priority document. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure.

At paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to Fig. 18, requiring Fig. 18 to be labeled --Prior Art--. The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 18, in that Fig. 18 has been so labeled. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

At paragraph 5, Claim 1 was objected to for the reasons given. Applicants have amended Claim 1 by reciting “the plural terminal apparatuses” instead of “such plural terminal apparatuses”. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to Claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sakakibara et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0161590 A1).^{2/}

Claim 1 is directed to an image distribution system in a virtual space system composed of terminal apparatuses respectively provided at plural users and a server apparatus connected to the plural terminal apparatuses through a communication channel for constructing a virtual space including a first virtual area to show a condition of each user with image and text and a second virtual area to have a conference for distributing an

^{2/}Applicants note that the Office Action Summary Sheet acknowledges the previous election of Claims 1-8 and 14-16. However, the Office Action nonetheless treats non-elected Claims 9-13 and 17 on the merits.

image among the terminal apparatuses. Each terminal apparatus comprises image obtaining means, image compression means, transmission means, reception display means, designation means, and control means. The image obtaining means obtains the image of the user, and the image compression means compresses the image with a quantization coefficient. The transmission means transmits the image, obtained by the image obtaining means, to the server apparatus, and the reception display means receives and displays the image transmitted from the server apparatus. The designation means designates a position of the user in the virtual space. The control means controls the compression means with both a first quantization coefficient in accordance with the position of the user in the first virtual area, and a second quantization coefficient smaller than the first quantization coefficient in the second virtual area.

Among the notable features of Claim 1 are (1) constructing a virtual space including a first virtual area to show a condition of each user with image and text and a second virtual area to have a conference for distributing an image among the terminal apparatuses, (2) compressing the image of the user with a quantization coefficient, and (3) controlling the compression with both a first quantization coefficient in accordance with a position of the user in the first virtual area, and a second quantization coefficient smaller than the first quantization coefficient in the second virtual area.

Sakakibara et al. relates to a distributed office system and management method thereof. Sakakibara et al. discusses providing a distributed office system and a method of managing the system, in which a plurality of user terminal devices installed in

different places, and usually one host server device are connected via a communication network.

While paragraphs 0079 to 0081 of Sakakibara relates to controlling the size of an image, nothing in Sakakibara teaches or suggests control means for controlling image compression means with both a first quantization coefficient in accordance with the position of a user in a first virtual area and a second quantization coefficient smaller than the first quantization coefficient in a second virtual area, as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is seen to be clearly allowable over Sakakibara et al.

Independent Claims 6 and 14 recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to Claim 1 and therefore are also believed to be patentable over Sakakibara for the reasons discussed above.

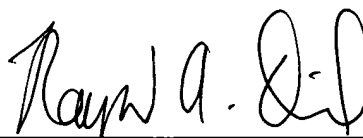
A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Raymond A. DiPerna", written over a horizontal line.

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